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ABSTRACT

Community colleges and baccalaureate and graduate degree granting institutions are active in school-to-career efforts in Colorado in a variety of ways. This document describes some School-to-Career initiatives at Colorado colleges, grouped according to three major educational objectives. The first is to infuse School-to-Career competencies and skills into the curricula at postsecondary institutions. Curriculum development efforts of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Colorado State University, and the University of Colorado at Denver, as well as programs implemented by two colleges under a grant from the Education Commission of the States are described. The second objective is to ease the transition to, through, and from postsecondary education. Some of the programs that foster this objective are a pilot study on competency based admission, the availability of college courses for high school students, transfer policies, local partnership committees, and a study of performance indicators for use in funding systems. The third goal is to encourage modifications in teacher education programs to include School-to-Career content and pedagogy. Two examples are given of work in this area. (SLD)

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POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION'S POLICY ROLE IN COLORADO'S IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-TO-CAREER

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POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION'S POLICY ROLE IN COLORADO'S IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-TO-CAREER

Colorado community college, baccalaureate, and graduate-degree granting institutions are active in School-to-Career in a variety of ways. Higher education institutions are developing curricula and processes to infuse School-to-Career competencies into liberal arts and general education curricula, while the state higher education coordinating board is developing funding, financial aid, and admissions policies that support School-to-Career goals. The following postsecondary efforts are categorized by the three higher education objectives mentioned in the background section.

A. Goal 1: To infuse School-to-Career competencies and skills into the curricula at postsecondary institutions

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs - Project Transition

"Project Transition is intended to help students transition *into* the university through an expanded Freshman Seminar Program, *through* the university via several academic courses, and *from* the university into the world of work through a Senior Seminar Program."[1] The project to date has involved faculty and administrators from the Colleges of Letters, Arts and Sciences; Business; Engineering; and the School of Education. This year the institution is developing a complete sequence of courses:

Freshman Seminar includes a module to assist students identify their interests and strengths as they relate to particular majors. High school students are also enrolled in the Freshman Seminar to help high school students make the transition to college-level work.

Sophomore Seminar assists transfer students with career interests and self-evaluation of skills and knowledge.

Junior Seminar requires service learning to explore different career areas.

Senior Seminar is exploring the addition of career components to the disciplines' capstone courses. In addition, three one-credit courses are being developed : Career Strengths, Career Skills, and Career Success to be taught by the College of Business faculty and local business people.

Colorado State University - Reciprocal Experiential Learning

The goals of this project are to: 1) make experiential learning universally available to all students in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences; 2) fold the experiences of the students back into the curriculum; and 3) utilize experiential learning opportunities to engage external constituents with the university.

The university has determined that most of these colleges' departments offer either internships, practica or research opportunities and that approximately 10% of the students participate in these opportunities currently. Of those departments that do not offer these opportunities 75% (6 of 8) are planning to add these courses to the curriculum in the next two years. To support these additional classes and increase the numbers of students participating, the colleges and the career center have greatly increased the number of

[1] "Project Transition" - Professor Constance Staley; proposal to School-to-Career, October, 1997

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internships available and included this information on the Web, and are in the process of developing an internship newsletter.

Although experiential learning opportunities are currently not required in most departments for graduation, five departments are considering making it a requirement. Also, the departments are being encouraged to add faculty internship coordinators to facilitate students' opportunities.

To meet the goal of folding the students' experiences back into the curriculum and courses, many students who have participated in experiential learning must present a report to the faculty, students, or at a seminar. This practice is being encouraged and departments are exploring a requirement that students discuss their experiences in the senior capstone courses.

The university is devising a process to engage employers in giving feedback about the students who worked with them, including utilizing focus groups. The colleges will create employer advisory groups for each of the departments in Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences to elicit employer feedback to improve courses and curriculum. The third stage of this process is to develop exchange programs between faculty and employers.

University of Colorado at Denver - Career Planning and Management Certificate Program

The University of Colorado at Denver - Liberal Arts College is developing a comprehensive certificate program to enhance college graduates' knowledge and thinking skills as identified in the SCANS report. The Certificate Program is a 4-stage career development program designed to give students the skills, knowledge, experience, and confidence to be successful in the workplace after graduation. Students are required to complete all four stages of the program and demonstrate proficiency in specified skills areas before receiving the certificate.

The Four Stages of the Program are:

- Creating a personal foundation for career development
- Exploring educational and career options
- Decision making and goal setting
- Job search strategies

The certificate includes curricular and co-curricular activities and learning:

- Academic course work (e.g., freshman seminar, technical writing, computer applications, leadership courses and service learning)
- Non-Credit Workplace Skills and Competencies Modules (e.g., oral communication, writing for the workplace, technical communication)
- Experiential learning activities (e.g., shadowing/mentoring, internships)
- Career Planning/Management (e.g., self-assessment, career advising, job search strategies, interviews)

UCD has already re-designed the required Freshman Seminar to include a career component to align it with the proposed certificate. The re-designed Freshman seminar has been adopted by the faculty and is in place for Fall 1997. The other elements of the certificate will be gradually added until all components are available in Fall 1998.

To ensure the sustainability of this effort, faculty need information on careers and how to weave these types of skills into their courses. An established office on campus, The Office of Teaching Effectiveness will be the conduit for workshops, newsletters, and information on careers to support faculty efforts.

Education Commission of the States Grant: Connecting Learning with Work

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) chose Colorado as one of the six states to receive assistance to connect learning with work in the postsecondary sector. Colorado will develop a series of workshops in each of the six School-to-Career regions on how to integrate the mandated academic standards with workplace competencies K-16 in the area of writing. Two higher education institutions - the University of Northern Colorado and Western State College - have taken the lead on implementing this project. English professors from those two institutions as well as other English professors from most of the four-year and two-year institutions will be invited to attend a workshop. This workshop will discuss a model developed by a group of K-12, two-year, and four-year institutions that are integrating academic content standards and workplace competencies. The faculty then will participate with K-12 teachers and School-to-Career coordinators in the regional confereneces to build K-16 writing models. This project is in the planning phase with a pilot conference to be conducted in Spring of 1998.

Work-Study Proposal - University of Colorado at Denver, Metropolitan State College and Community College of Denver

As part of its budget request, CCHE asked the legislature for an additional $250,000 in 1998/99 to fund a pilot study. This study will support internships/cooperative experiences for undergraduate postsecondary students to apply their academic knowledge in the world of work. Only those internships that augment the student's academic work would be eligible for funding from this pot of work study dollars. Metropolitan State College, Community College of Denver and the University of Colorado at Denver have preliminarily agreed to participate in the project. If the request is funded by the legislature, the institutions will work to identify students and workplace experiences that would fulfill the intent of the pilot study and to assist in developing an evaluation of the pilot study.

B. Goal 2: To ease the transition to, through, and from postsecondary education:

Competency Based Admission - Pilot Study

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's pilot study compares students' success in college based on admission under a traditional admissions process (GPA and ACT/SAT scores) with a competency-based admissions process. Currently, 18 high schools and 10 four-year institutions are participating.

College Courses Available to High School Students

Colorado statute allows high school students to take college level courses and postsecondary institutions can request state funding for giving the class. In the 1996/97 school year, high school students generated 25,859 credit hours in college level courses (for which the institutions requested funding). This is a significantly understated number,

since many institutions offer classes to high school students but do not request state funding for these classes.

Transfer Policy

The long-standing transfer policy has resulted in significant increases in the ease and number of students transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions. Transfer policies for the core curriculum and disciplines like business, engineering, and nursing have made a significant impact on obtaining an education efficiently.

Local Partnership Members

Several postsecondary institutions are active members on local partnership committees. The postsecondary members assist the partnership with the articulation from high school to the institution, develop curricula that flow easily from secondary to postsecondary, and assist high schools to provide college-level classes in the high school.

Funding System - Performance Indicators

The General Assembly passed a statute in 1996 to require all postsecondary institutions to report on a series of indicators and those results would be a factor in developing funding requests. Nine performance indicators were developed at the state level and three support school-to-career activities. Two of those performance indicators are:

a) Existence and operation of a formal, comprehensive, and effective academic and career advising system, including providing information on career opportunities available in the academic discipline the student pursues.
b) Employer satisfaction - Employers will be surveyed on their satisfaction level with graduates' preparation, including technical skills, analytic skills, communication and interpersonal skills, knowledge, and attitude.

C. Goal 3: To encourage modifications in the teacher education programs to include School-to-Career content and pedagogy.

Teacher Education - University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

The UCCS School of Education will require pre-service students in the Teacher Education program to develop a module on careers during their elementary, secondary, or content area methods course to deliver during the student teaching experience. The School of Education is investigating the development of a School-to-Career in-service for teachers in those K-12 schools that are partners with the UCCS School-of-Education.

Funding System - Performance Indicators:
One additional statewide performance indicator also supports School-to-Career activities:

K-12 Linkages and Teacher Preparation - Institutions will report on 1) the number of college level classes provided to secondary students, 2) the integration of experiential learning into the curriculum, 3) participation in K-12 and postsecondary faculty exchanges and conferences, and for institutions with teacher education programs; 4) the average number of hours spent in K12 settings per FTE faculty member.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

TEN ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT SCHOOL-TO-CAREER

1) DISCUSS THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF HIGH SCHOOL WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES AND CAREER EXPLORATION AND THE AVAILABILITY OF WORK-BASED LEARNING AT THE INSTITUTION IN THE INSTITUTION'S CATALOGUE.

2) DIRECT WORK STUDY DOLLARS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS OBTAINING WORK EXPERIENCE AND/OR INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR ACADEMIC FIELD.

3) DESIGNATE ONE PERSON AT THE INSTITUTION TO BE THE CONTACT PERSON FOR SCHOOL-TO-CAREER.

4) SUPPORT REVIEW OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND LIBERAL ARTS CURRICULA TO ENSURE INCLUSION OF BASIC WORKFORCE COMPETENCIES (E.G., TEAMWORK, A VARIETY OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS, TECHNOLOGY SKILLS, DECISION-MAKING AND ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS.

5) ENCOURAGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO INCLUDE SCHOOL-TO-CAREER COMPONENTS IN THE PREREQUISITES, CURRICULA AND STUDENT TEACHING ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM.

6) EXAMINE CURRENT AND POSSIBLE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS TO ENSURE THE LEAST DUPLICATION OF COURSES BETWEEN DIFFERENT EDUCATION LEVELS.

7) OFFER COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOLS TO ASSIST STUDENTS IN THEIR TRANSITION TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.

8) ENCOURAGE AND REWARD FACULTY FOR WORKING WITH AND HELPING TO BUILD STRONG SCHOOL-TO-CAREER PARTNERSHIPS, INCLUDING ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE FACULTY KNOWLEDGE OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE ACADEMIC CONTENT AREA TO WORK.

9) UTILIZE COMPETENCY-BASED ADMISSIONS POLICIES THAT RECOGNIZE THE VALIDITY OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE LEARNED IN CAREER EXPLORATION AND WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES.

10) IDENTIFY THE INSTITUTION AS A SCHOOL-TO-CAREER PARTNER AND PRESENT THE SCHOOL-TO-CAREER INITIATIVE IN PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND SPEECHES. ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS WHILE DISCUSSING THE CAREER EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS AT THE INSTITUTION.

Colorado School-to-Career Partnership 12-22-97

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